



MINORITY AND/OR WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISE COORDINATOR'S CONNECTION

SPRING 2009

Education, Opportunity, Empowerment: *A Recipe for Success*

Last year this time, it was just an idea. At an interest meeting in April 2008 with approximately 40 minority business owners, the idea of creating a professional networking association of minority business owners was born. One year later, the Minority Business Roundtable is blossoming into a proactive, performing team poised to do great things for M/WBEs.

Hosted by the M/WBE Program and the Greenville-Pitt Chamber of Commerce, the Roundtable is designed to help minority businesses leverage the resources within the community to strengthen the community. Its mission, "fostering supportive networks for the education, opportunity, and empowerment of minority business owners," is the driving force behind the agenda of the group headed up by Chair Torey Mattison of Core Fitness & Wellness and Vice Chair Owen Burney of Burney & Burney Construction. Also on the roster of leaders is Secretary Lola Thompson of True Connections and Assistant Secretary Dianne Wilkins of Char-Will Enterprises.

The Roundtable had a defining impact on the 4th Annual Mix'n'Meet'n'Learn event by suggesting the addition of a motivational speaker to the workshops and vender fair. Coach Michael Washington of ActionCoach Business Coaching received very positive reviews from his talk, "Don't Just Survive, but THRIVE in a Tough Economy."

But, this group is just getting started. To jumpstart its purpose, the group has established three sub-committees to coincide with the three areas of activity: Education, Opportunity, and Empowerment. The committees are headed up by Carlton Gay of EXCEED, Bob Griffin of ECU Materials Management, and DeDe Carney of Carney & Co Realty, respectively. The Education committee is already busy at work developing a curriculum to inform members about the recently passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and how small business can benefit.

The Roundtable is on the move, working for you. Be the change you wish to see by getting involved and making a positive contribution to the future of your business. A membership application can be found on www.greenvillenc.gov, click on "Businesses" then "M/WBE Program." Come on out and join us the 3rd Thursday of each month and be a part of the movement.

Welcome to the New M/WBE's!

- BREE & Associates (Durham, NC)
- Cartridge Plus (Greenville, NC)
- Ecoroot (Emerald Isle, NC)
- Evergreen Solutions, LLC (Tallahassee, Florida)
- Mayer Electric Supply (Greenville, NC)



Greenville #2 Best Place for Business and Careers

Forbes magazine ranked Greenville the 2nd best place in the nation for business and careers. Pitt County Development Commission Director Wanda Yuhas noted Greenville's diverse economy and ability to move up the ranks from #8 to #2 in a recession proof of our place among the elite. Greenville's high marks on job and income growth, colleges, educational attainment, cost of living, and cost of doing business are credit to our strong, stable economy.

Raleigh ranked #1 among large metros for the 3rd year in a row.

CITY OF GREENVILLE, NC



A Message from the Coordinator...

Bouncing Back

I'm not a huge basketball fan, but around this time of year, I cannot help but become infected with the frenzy in college play known as March Madness. Fast paced and intense, college basketball is more than just a sport—it is a high stakes competition where win or lose, everything is left out on the floor. And, this is not just for the athletes. The spectators, too, put their heart and soul into the game. They soar when their team wins and plummet when their team loses. Everyone has a stake; everyone plays to win.



As entrepreneurs in the high stakes game of owning your own business, I'm sure you oftentimes feel like you are out on the court of a volatile economy, playing hard and playing tough to stay in the game of winning customers and making a livelihood. At times like these, when the economy is on the rocks and it seems like more factors than usual are working against you, it's easy to lose a little steam. But, you still have time to bounce back. Now is the time to be your own coach and implement your game winning strategy...

1. Take a "20-second" time out. Look at your business strategy and your competition. Are you playing the right defense? Are you utilizing all the players (resources) on the floor and working as a team? Go over your business plan and make needed changes.

2. Take advantage of every shot and be ready to get the rebound. In business as in life, there are no guarantees. Try your best plays, but be ready to re-position. If your old marketing strategy is no longer bringing in the clients, try something new (see "Social Media"). Also, be willing to diversify your offerings. It may be just the thing that will pull you ahead of the pack.

3. Play to Win. Strive for excellence and settle for nothing less. When money is tight, folks are discriminating. Give your customer every reason to come back again and again.

Go Team!!

contact Denisha at
252.329.4862 or dharris@greenvillenc.gov

What you need to know about Statewide Uniform Certification

July 2009 is fast approaching and Senate Bill 320 otherwise known as Statewide Uniform Certification will soon become the law of the land in NC. Statewide Uniform Certification (SWUC) was passed in August 2007 as a benefit to M/WBE's who desire to do business with public entities (i.e.: cities, counties, et cetera) but need to cut through the bureaucracy of multiple certifications. Starting in July, a business will be able to certify once with the NC HUB Office and do business with most agencies in the State.

If you are not certified with NC HUB by July 2009, you will no longer be listed in the M/WBE Directory as a certified minority firm. Those who are in this category will receive a letter from the M/WBE Office to this effect. This letter will reserve you a seat in the upcoming workshops, "What you need to know about Statewide Uniform Certification," so that I may walk you through the new legislation and the online certification process. These workshops will take place Thursday, May 14th and Tuesday, May 19th at 5:30pm, Greenville City Hall, 1st Floor Training Room. **These workshops will be your second opportunity to learn about SWUC and become certified so please take advantage!**

Businesses who decide not to certify with the State may continue to do business with the City and GUC. However, their participation **will not** count as a minority firm.

If you have any questions, please contact Denisha Harris, M/WBE Coordinator at 252.329.4862.

MINORITY AND/OR WOMEN
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Upcoming Business Development Training & Workshops

May 7	How to do Business with Government Small Business Technology & Development Center ECU, Willis Building 5:30pm-7:30pm
May 14	Cash Flow Planning Small Business Technology & Development Center ECU, Willis Building 5:30pm-7:30pm
	What you need to know about Statewide Uniform Certification Greenville City Hall 1st Floor Training Room 5:30pm-7:00pm
May 19	What you need to know about Statewide Uniform Certification Greenville City Hall 1st Floor Training Room 5:30pm-7:00pm
May 21	Minority Business Roundtable Greenville City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room 12:00pm-2:00pm
	Introduction to Business Small Business Technology & Development Center ECU, Willis Building 5:30pm-7:30pm
June 11	How to Conduct Market Research Small Business Technology & Development Center ECU, Willis Building 5:30pm-7:30pm
June 18	Minority Business Roundtable Greenville City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room 12:00pm-2:00pm (Feel free to bring lunch)
June 19	So why is planning so important anyway? (Fee Required) Coach Michael Washington of ActionCOACH Business Coaching Greenville City Hall 9:00am-3:00pm

To view the Spring/Summer 2009 Class Schedule for Pitt Community College Small Business Center, visit <http://www.pittcc.edu/continuing-education/programs/small-business-center/>

Registration is required for all trainings & workshops.

How to Use Social Media to Reach New Customers (amended) By Rich Brooks

What is Social Media?

Like any emerging idea, the definition of social media is still a little blurry around the edges. And, like that other popular Internet pastime, social media may be something that is difficult to define, but you'll know it when you see it.

Social media is an umbrella term that includes interactive broadcasts such as blogs and podcasts, as well as social networking Web sites. These Web sites often allow visitors to become users or members, create profiles, and upload and share content through the Web site. There are hundreds--if not thousands--of social media Web sites out there, but here are a few of the more popular ones:

- **MySpace:** Originally a place for bands to promote themselves, it has become one of the most popular sites on the Web today. Anyone can create a profile and there are no identity checks. Companies targeting consumers often set up shop here.
- **LinkedIn:** This networking Web site allows you to create a profile and connect with colleagues, give and get recommendations, and find people outside your immediate network for new opportunities.
- **Facebook:** One of the fastest growing social media sites out there. It started as a site just for college students but is now open to everyone. Although it has fewer members than MySpace, its growth and buzz is enough to make Google nervous.

Why Should You Care About Social Networking Sites?

Location, location, location. If you had a retail outlet you wouldn't set up shop where there's no foot traffic, would you? Well, your customers and clients are already at social media Web sites. They're on MySpace, they're LinkedIn, and they have Facebook pages. They share photos at Flickr and upload family movies to YouTube. You need to go to where your customers are.

How Do You Succeed with Social Media?

Let me share a secret with you: I don't know. Using social media as a marketing or networking tool is in its infancy. What seems like a good idea today may turn out to be a bullet point on "The Top Ten Mistakes Businesses Make with Social Media" tomorrow.

In addition, like a lot of marketing endeavors, the results may be difficult to track. Did that lead come from your Facebook profile, your blog, or a newspaper ad you took out? You can certainly sit back and wait for your competitors to make the first move and learn from their mistakes. But while you're on the sidelines, they'll be making connections and building relationships with your prospects. Are you willing to take that chance?

In Conclusion

The social media rules are still being written. Where does social networking end and commercial networking begin? Is this the future of the Web, or just another evolutionary

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step? Will today's social media leaders be around tomorrow, or will some other interrupting technology crash the party?

The only thing that seems certain is that people are congregating at these social networking sites at an astounding rate. The landscape is changing, and these sites have become the backyard fences, the coffee shops, and the street corners of the 21st century.

Ignore them at your own risk.

Brought to you by SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business."

Advertisements

Luncheon with the Bankers

May 21st, 12:00pm-2:00pm
Greenville City Hall

Q & A session with local bankers to discuss how economic stimulus funds can help small business. Attendees are encouraged to prepare questions for our guests.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP by May 18th to Denisha Harris at dharris@greenvillenc.gov or 252.329.4862

Sponsored by the Minority Business Roundtable in partnership with the City of Greenville/GUC/Greenville-Pitt Chamber of Commerce



"Putting Our Words to Work."

- Electronic Notification of Upcoming Bid Opportunities
- Business Locator in M/WBE Directory
- Business Development & Technical Assistance
- Quarterly Newsletter with the Latest Information

For more information, contact: Denisha Harris, M/WBE Coordinator at 252.329.4862 dharris@greenvillenc.gov.

Check out our information on the City's website, www.greenvillenc.gov under the Financial Services' Purchasing Division.

It is the policy of the City of Greenville and Greenville Utilities Commission to provide minorities and women equal opportunity for participating in all aspects of the City's and Utilities' contracting and procurement programs, including but not limited to, construction projects, supplies and materials purchases, and professional and personal service contracts.

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